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ON PAGE A-1

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McFarlane says Hill knew about mining

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ANNAPOLIS, Md. — "Every important detail" of United States secret warfare in El Salvador and Nicaragua — including the mining of Nicaraguan harbors — was "shared in full by the proper congressional oversight committees," insists President Reagan's assistant for national security affairs, Robert C. McFarlane.

Mr. McFarlane said he "cannot account for" Sen. Barry Goldwater's contention that he was kept ignorant about the CIA-sponsored harbor minings.

He told a large audience at the Naval Academy Foreign Affairs Conference that disclosure of

secret plans to specified congressional committees "as . . . provided by law," was "faithfully" accomplished.

He did not go so far as to say that Sen. Goldwater, R-Ariz., who is chairman of the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, was made personally aware of the CIA's mining activities.

He said, however, that Sen. Patrick J. Leahy, D-Vt., had disclosed on National Public Television that he had been made aware of the minings and who was responsible for them before the information became public.

A spokesman for Sen. Leahy said yesterday the senator had missed a CIA briefing in late March and requested another to catch up.

He was given a private briefing and in that session "he asked the right question," and received the reply that the harbors of Nicaragua were being mined.

The senator, the spokesman said, "assumed the other senators had been told, too."

In response to accusations from congressmen and others that U.S. assistance in the laying of mines amounted to "terrorism," Mr. McFarlane contended that the harbor mining is different.

"It is not like a terrorist," he explained, "because the Nicaraguans knew the mines were there for months. They announced it. So it is not like a terrorist act where it is a surprise."

He went on to defend the secret war in Central America because "there are instances short of war when American interests are affected and where short of war, which we do not want, we act."

He said he did not believe Congress and the people of the United States "would stand for" a declared war in Central America.

"Should we specifically declare war if we disagree with a country in Central America?" he asked rhetorically. "No, we shouldn't. Then the question is: 'When an American interest is affected, such as our interest with El Salvador, should we under any concept take an action short of declared war?'"

He said that U. S. actions in Central America, both secret and open, are based on a world-wide strategy of dealing with the "expansion of power" by the Soviet Union.

The strategy, which he says President Reagan "thought about for a long time" and adopted in the second year of his presidency, goes beyond the previous but "obsolescent" policy of "containment."

Containment was an approach to dealing with the Soviet Union that emphasized diplomatic, military and trade relations with nations surrounding the Soviet Union's borders to forge a ring of friendly buffer nations to hold Soviet power in check.

Mr. McFarlane argued that the idea no longer works because the Soviets are now militarily strong and adventurous enough to leapfrog the buffer states and jump any-

where in the world that suits their own strategies.

The new Reagan strategy, known as "beyond containment" or "credible deterrence and peaceful competition," demands that wherever the Soviets or their friends turn up to threaten U. S. interests, they be met by some form of U.S. counter-threat. This can be military, economic, or both, depending on the circumstances.

"We will provide American assistance and American power," he said. "We will respond or deter by air and by sea. We will deal with violence if it will occur."

He said that Central America is a place where the new strategy is being tested.